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Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Information submitted by the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system on their activities with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
I.	Introduction	1–3	2
II.	Support by specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to Non-Self-Governing Territories	4–41	2
A.	United Nations Development Programme	6–26	2
B.	Universal Postal Union	27–30	6
C.	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	31	6
D.	United Nations International Drug Control Programme	32–37	7
E.	World Health Organization	38–40	7
F.	United Nations Environment Programme	41	9

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I. Introduction

1. At its substantive session of 1998, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1998/38 of 30 July 1998 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations.

2. In paragraph 17 of its resolution 53/62, the General Assembly requested the Council to continue to consider, in consultation with the Special Committee, appropriate measures for coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system in implementing relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

3. Information submitted by the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system on their activities in relation to Non-Self-Governing Territories is set out below.

II. Support by specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to Non-Self-Governing Territories

4. According to the information provided by specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, during the period under review a number of specialized agencies and organizations have continued to extend assistance to the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories in response to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Council and the Special Committee. A number of organizations have extended or formulated such programmes of assistance from within their own budgetary resources, in addition to their respective contributions as executing agencies of projects funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the primary provider of assistance.

5. A number of assistance projects have continued to be funded by UNDP, in close collaboration with other agencies and organizations of the United Nations system.

A. United Nations Development Programme

6. The UNDP mandate in the Caribbean territories is implemented in consultation with the government authorities and the organization within the framework of their specific development priorities and concerns. UNDP supports programmes of technical cooperation with five British dependent territories of the Caribbean: Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Technical cooperation programmes are also supported in two Dutch dependent territories, Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles. Although the extent and focus of these programmes vary greatly, technical cooperation is executed in conformity with the UNDP guidelines for the implementation of the successor programming arrangement and decisions of the UNDP Executive Board, particularly those concerning the focus and allocation of assistance under each programming cycle. Relevant resolutions of the General Assembly are also taken into consideration.

7. The thrust of the UNDP successor programming arrangements under the fifth cycle and in the current programme cycle, with emphasis on the promotion of sustainable human development, continues to be guided by decisions 95/22 and 95/23 of the UNDP Executive Board, as follows:

(a) Social development and poverty eradication;

(b) Employment generation and sustainable livelihoods;

(c) Governance, participation and the empowerment of women;

(d) Protection of the environment and natural resource management.

8. Cooperation between UNDP and the non-independent territories of the Caribbean has been influenced also by the decisions and outcomes of various United Nations conferences, including the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, convened in 1994; the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), convened in 1994; the World Summit for Social Development, convened in 1995; and the Fourth World Conference on Women, convened in 1995.

Programming arrangements

9. Continuing resource constraints faced by UNDP, particularly during the recent fifth cycle and in the current programme cycle, have severely restricted the ability of the organization to respond more fully to the technical cooperation needs of the dependent territories of the Caribbean. A common feature of these territories is their relatively high per capita income levels and development indices. In contrast, these territories are confronted by a lack of capacity at both the institutional and human resource levels. The limited trained human resource base place a constraint to going to scale in the areas of training and human resource development. As a result, there is a marked increase in the costs of administration, government and physical infrastructure, especially in multi-islands territories. The brain drain and population exodus caused by several factors compound that situation and create undue reliance on expatriate manpower.

10. The resulting vulnerability of the economies and societies of small dependent territories further compound the difficulties faced by authorities in selecting and applying appropriate and effective policy instruments. Both are heavily susceptible to external shocks, and are equally vulnerable to the vagaries of climate and environmental occurrences. The endemic weaknesses combine to revalidate a continuing role for UNDP in the provision of timely, focused and effective technical assistance consistent with its overall thrust and their priority concerns and needs.

11. UNDP's diminishing resources have resulted in the review of the organization's priorities in the allocation of assistance. Gross domestic production (GDP), per capita income, population size and levels of development of recipient countries have been used as a base for calculating equitable indices for the allocation of assistance. In 1997, all of the non-independent territories of the Caribbean that maintain technical cooperation programmes with the organization attained the status of net contributor countries on the basis of their GDP being above US$ 4,700, with a three-year grace period ending in 2000. Anguilla and the Cayman Islands have been allocated TRAC[1] resources for the current cycle of $147,000 and $66,000, respectively, on a transitional, fully reimbursable basis in accordance with paragraph 23 of UNDP Executive Board decision 95/23. Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands have each been allocated TRAC resources of $49,000 and $222,000, respectively, on an established, fully reimbursable basis in accordance with paragraph 21 of the same decision. The territories with no TRAC are Aruba, the British Virgin Islands and the Netherlands Antilles. Cooperation with all of these territories places high emphasis on resource mobilization and cost-sharing.

12. In addition to their TRAC allocations, some of the territories benefit from the Caribbean component of UNDP's regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean.

In particular, the British Virgin Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands have access to the benefits for the ongoing regional disaster response and management project. Additional benefits will accrue to the Turks and Caicos Islands under the support for policy and programme development and support for technical services frameworks. Montserrat, as a member of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), will continue to benefit, as it did in the fifth cycle, from the Caribbean multi-island programme. Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands, which have also received similar benefits in the past as associate member States of OECS, will also have access to this programme of assistance. UNDP is also encouraging the partnership of technical cooperation among developing countries activities and the partners in development programme to provide benefits for these territories.

13. All the Governments and UNDP country offices that serve them stand to receive technical assistance and the services of the subregional resource facility created by UNDP for the Caribbean and based within the UNDP office in Trinidad and Tobago.

Other areas of assistance

14. The Small Island Developing States Information Network (SIDSNET) and Small Island Developing States Technical Assistance Programme (SIDSTAP), respectively, conceived to promote and enhance the flow of sustainable development information among small island developing States, and to provide technical expertise in addressing gaps in technical assistance needs through exchanges among small island developing States and between small island developing States and other States, will enhance further the process of integration of the non-independent territories into the global arena.

15. Resident representatives from the four UNDP Caribbean offices have initiated, in collaboration with the Governments, the establishment of United Nations focal points to strengthen dialogue and promote contact between the territories, UNDP and the rest of the United Nations system.

16. UNDP has continued to engage in effective policy dialogue with the Governments of several Caribbean territories with a view to determining their most critical policy concerns and recommending ways for effectively utilizing assistance provided by the organization. UNDP resident representatives who also frequently monitor developments of a social, economic and political nature in the countries concerned have carried out these functions. Both the process of consultations and the ongoing review of conditions within each territory inform the formulation of appropriate programmes of technical assistance by UNDP.

17. In addition to its role in all the above-mentioned respects, UNDP also performs the function of maintaining critical liaison and coordination with other agencies of the United Nations system. This function has often proved necessary in the determination of needs and the delivery of assistance to the territories, particularly with respect to emergencies.

Focus of assistance

18. Country cooperation frameworks for implementation in the new programme cycle were approved by the Executive Board of UNDP/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). In September 1998, the Board approved the framework for the Turks and Caicos Islands; the framework for Aruba will be submitted to the Board in April 1999. The Executive Board agreed to postpone the approval of the framework for Montserrat on account of the continuing volcanic crisis there. In September 1999, the framework for Montserrat will be submitted. Altogether, these policy documents are set within the context of UNDP thematic focus areas and the needs and priorities of the respective Governments. Furthermore, country

programmes and cooperation frameworks set out in analytical terms the policy issues facing each territory from a sustainable human development perspective, along with the details of the UNDP strategy and focus of its assistance.

19. In the light of the significantly reduced flows of development assistance from the United Kingdom to Anguilla, the financing of its cooperation programme during this cycle will come mainly from government cost-sharing contributions. The programme as approved will concentrate on human resource development and environmental management. UNDP will be expected to provide increasingly substantive support to the Government in the area of resource mobilization.

20. The British Virgin Islands has received no TRAC allocation for its programme, which will be fully funded from government cost-sharing resources. Cooperation in this cycle continues to focus on social development and poverty eradication, with emphasis on the situation of women and children. Environment and natural resources management remain among the priority sectors.

21. In the Cayman Islands, UNDP will build on achievements in its support for training and human resource development provided during the fifth programming cycle. A country cooperation framework which was formulated for adoption by the Executive Board in 1998 was withdrawn at the request of the Government of the Cayman Islands. It is envisaged, subject to the outcome of the ongoing discussions, that assistance will be framed in the context of priorities outlined in the national "Vision 2008" exercise which is taking place in the Cayman Islands. The "Vision 2008" plan is the focus of broad-based national consultations prior to its formal adoption by the Cayman Islands Government and Legislature.

22. UNDP support to Montserrat, which presented a special case for assistance during most of the fifth cycle as a result of the volcanic eruption, initially focused on the development and implementation of policies and programmes in environment and natural resources management and in strengthening institutional capacity in this area. Some of the inputs were directed towards physical planning, liquid and solid waste management and disaster planning and management, among other things. However, the continuing crisis has necessitated a shift in the direction of external aid to the provision of emergency relief. UNDP, in addition to supporting critical gaps in the emergency phase, has also provided support for longer-term resettlement and development efforts. It is anticipated that this need will continue in much of the current cycle as a consequence of this crisis. These circumstances prompted a request for UNDP to initiate a re-examination of Montserrat's status as a net contributor country, within the guidelines provided for such cases, in the light of the severe adverse impacts on the island's economy and society. In September 1997, the Executive Board endorsed the provision of additional emergency resources for Montserrat for housing environmental health and microenterprises development.

23. In the Turks and Caicos Islands, technical cooperation has been largely aimed at "direct interventions" with a view to laying the basis for meaningful development in such an economy. Assistance was granted for the establishment of an investment agency, the creation of a national insurance scheme, improving customs administration and tertiary-level education. In the current cycle, support is envisaged in two areas: preparation of an integrated development plan, and sustainable livelihoods and employment creation through assistance linking agriculture and small enterprise development with tourism.

24. The Government of Bermuda has opted to suspend its cooperation with UNDP on account of the net contributor country status that was conferred to it.

25. In Aruba, UNDP assistance contributed to the establishment of an epidemiology unit in the Department of Health and the strengthening of information systems and data management capacity for the health sector. These projects are currently ongoing, as are discussions with Government for the preparation of a new country cooperation framework. It is expected that a new programme will build on current assistance, particularly in the use of data and data analysis in influencing policy formulation.

26. Support has been provided to the Netherlands Antilles in the areas of capacity-building and public sector reform, assessment of technical assistance support, the streamlining of debt management and the management of the country's structural adjustment programme. A new country cooperation framework has been prepared and is being finalized with the Government and the Netherlands Authority.

B. Universal Postal Union

27. The Universal Postal Congress adopted decision 57/1994 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies.

28. To implement this decision, the International Bureau has reported to the Council of Administration at each of its annual meetings on the action it has taken with respect to the recommendations of the United Nations concerning the implementation of the Declaration.

29. The UPU technical cooperation programme comprised projects and activities aimed at providing assistance to refugees and to the Non-Self-Governing Territories funded from the Union's own resources and under UNDP-financed activities. Thus, for example, the Palestinian Authority benefited from the following projects and activities:

(a) A multi-year integrated project entitled "Development of Postal Services" (provision of operating equipment);

(b) A mission undertaken by the UPU regional adviser and by a sectoral support consultant (analysis of the status of postal services and programming);

(c) A scholarship under the UPU Special Fund for a course on postal security in Cairo;

(d) The provision of operating equipment through contributions made by Germany and Spain to the UPU Special Fund.

30. UPU has also implemented many projects and activities for newly independent countries.

C. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

31. While the FAO mandate does not specifically encompass the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples, its assistance in the areas of food security, agricultural, forest and fisheries development remains relevant to the small island territories, which form the large majority of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. FAO contributions to work undertaken by the Commission on Sustainable Development on the sustainable development of small island developing States is also relevant in this regard.

D. United Nations International Drug Control Programme

32. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), in line with the requests and recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 53/62, in particular paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 (b), continues to cooperate with and provide assistance to Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories.

33. Within its programme on the application of internationally established standards and norms in the fields of crime prevention and justice, as well as the provision of technical cooperation, the Centre's overall objectives are to (a) promote international cooperation in crime prevention and control; (b) support the development of criminal justice systems; and (c) assist Member States in addressing the challenges and threats posed by the changing nature of transnational organized crime. The Centre is ready to provide support to Non-Self Governing Territories in establishing and promoting the maintenance of the rule of law and fighting illegal and criminal activities with regard to the improvement of instruments to combat transnational crime. The Centre is currently supporting the elaboration of a convention on transnational crime, which is expected to be finalized by the year 2000. In addition, three protocols to the convention, on smuggling migrants, trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms and ammunition are under elaboration. The Centre is thus ready to provide support to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in particular those in the Caribbean region, in the context of the Centre's operational activities in fighting organized crime, trafficking in human beings and corruption.

34. In regard to the Barbados plan of action adopted at the first regional meeting on drug control cooperation and coordination, held at Bridgetown, Barbados, from 15 to 17 May 1996, in particular its 87 recommendations to counter drug abuse, illicit trafficking and related crimes in the Caribbean subregion, UNDCP has a leading role in the coordination and monitoring of action in the context of the plan, and cooperates with Caribbean jurisdictions and other relevant partners within and outside the subregion to ensure complementarity of assistance and non-duplication of efforts.

35. UNDCP provides technical assistance to Non-Self-Governing Caribbean Territories in subregional projects, such as training and advice to prevent and suppress illicit drug trafficking and improve the prosecution and adjudication of drug-related offences, including money-laundering. Training is also provided in drug abuse prevention.

36. UNDCP collaborates with regional organizations, such as the Caribbean Community, the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of American States and the South Pacific Forum, as well as with sectoral international organizations, such as the International Criminal Police Organization and the World Customs Organization.

37. Through the UNDCP global programme against money-laundering, UNDCP provides advice and assistance to States and territories with a view to improving laws and directed at the proceeds of crime, and to strengthen the actions of regulators and law enforcement officials against money launderers.

E. World Health Organization

38. The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for the Western Pacific Region collaborates in the provision of assistance to Non-Self Governing Territories in the area of emergency and disaster preparedness. More specifically, the following table indicates a number of environmental health problems that have been identified and on which WHO collaborates in the provision of assistance:

Territories	Environmental health problems
Pacific island territories	– Solid waste management
United States territories in the Pacific	– Traffic-related problems (vehicle emission, noise, accidents)
Guam Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands American Samoa	– Surfacewater (estuarine and coastal water) pollution from land-based sources
French Territories in the Pacific	– Future potential problems associated with an industrial complex being constructed
New Caledonia French Polynesia Wallis and Futuna	– Solid waste management, including hazardous waste – Excessive package waste, resulting from importation of food and other daily necessities, and difficulty associated with recycling – Difficulty in equipment maintenance – Difficulty in site acquisition for landfill – Problem of disposal of discarded vehicles and household appliances – Hazardous waste (e.g., pesticide waste, polychlorinated biphenyls from discarded transformers, waste oil, medical waste, timber treatment chemical waste, batteries); small quantity generated but no local capacity for treatment and disposal – Insufficient water supply for some of the small atoll islands – Inadequate on-site sanitation facilities and sewage treatment and disposal, causing water pollution in lagoons and coastal water – Contamination of groundwater lenses used for drinking water supplies – Localized air pollution near busy streets in urban centres, factories and open burning sites – Risk associated with nuclear testing *Other environmental concerns* – Global warming – Biodiversity

- Protection of seas/oceans from land and sea-based pollution
- El Niño and la Niña — related climate changes and consequent drought/flood situations
- Red-tide (paralytic shellfish poisoning), overfishing etc.

39. In addition, as a consequence of the prolonged drought in the South Tarawa and Banabe region in Kiribati, where a national state of emergency was declared, in March 1999, in response to the request of the Government of Kiribati, WHO provided technical assistance to assess the health impact of the drought and identify further needs in health protection and promotion, with special focus on water supply and sanitation, and more than one million water purification tablets for stockpile at health centres for distribution to households in the event of prolonged drought.

40. WHO also collaborated with the Government of Vanuatu in undertaking a health assessment study and medical relief related to the impact of the strike of cyclone Dani on Fiji and Vanuatu in January 1999.

F. United Nations Environment Programme

41. The United Nations Environment Programme recently reported to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventh session on its work related to small island developing States, which may be of some relevance since a number of former colonies are small island developing States.

Notes

[1] Target for resource assignment from the core.